

PRABUDDHA BHARATA

OR

Awakened India

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

Arise ! Awake ! and stop not till the goal is reached !

Katha. Upa. I. iii 4

No. 38, SEPTEMBER 1899

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MAYAVATI:

Kumaon, (Himalayas)

Foreign annually :

4s. or \$ 1.

Single copy 4d. or 10 cents

1899

Indian annually:

Re. 1-8.

Single copy As. 3

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*A lecture delivered in New York by Swami Abhedananda
on the 8th January 1899.*

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Prabuddha Bharata

No. 38—VOL. IV—SEPTEMBER 1899

ANGELS UNAWARES

II

One drunk with wine of wealth and power
And health to enjoy them both, whirled on
His maddening course,—till the earth (he thought
Was made for him, his pleasure-garden, and man,
The crawling worm, was made to find him sport),
Till the thousand lights of joy,—with pleasure fed,
That flickered day and night before his eyes,
With constant change of colours,—began to blur
His sight, and cloy his senses ; till selfishness,
Like a horny growth, had spread all o'er his heart ;
And pleasure meant to him no more than pain,—
Bereft of feeling ; and life in the sense,
So joyful, precious once, a rotting corpse between his arms,
(Which he forsooth would shun, but more he tried, the more
It clung to him ; and wished, with frenzied brain,
A thousand forms of death, but quailed before the charm).

Then sorrow came,—and Wealth and Power went,—
And made him kinship find with the human race
In groans and tears, and though his friends w'd laugh
His lips would speak in grateful accents,

“ O Blessed Misery ! ”

Vivekânanda.

LETTERS ABOUT INDIA

II

ANOTHER great characteristic of Indian Society as compared with Western, is the much higher civilisation and refinement of the lower orders. It is difficult for the European mind to recognise this fact under the mask of that grinding poverty which is so apparent here. The occidental conception of social development concerns itself much with labour and with letters, and more or less presupposes a condition of material prosperity. That is to say we are not able to detach the idea of the thing itself from that form of it which we have happened to produce. But if we drive the question of the ultimate significance of civilisation home, we shall all, I think, unite to acknowledge that it lies in a habit of self-restraint, in that which lifts man above the brute, rather in any special series of phenomena. And in these directions the bustee-population of an Indian city is so far ahead of the slum-population of London, Paris, or New York that an impartial critic could not fail to assign the order of age of their social systems correctly without *à priori* information.

Hindu culture is, in fact, like a gigantic tree which is constantly embracing a wider and wider area with its roots. Through ages this huge organism has been at work, silently reclaiming more and more of humanity from barbarism. Perhaps each successive stratum won

may have been a new caste taken in. Religious notions would seem to be the first great unifying nerves sent out. Then follow, though in what order I cannot guess, various accretions of custom, till by degrees appear the old gentleness, the old self-direction, and the old horror of defilement.

And so, silently, steadily, borne on the age-long stream of tendency to its inevitable goal, proceeds the education of a continent. The immensity of the original task can only be surmised from the time that has already elapsed in its accomplishment, and the number of tribes still excluded from the pale. But the value of an image-worshipping, temple-building faith, in a land where the cause of religion is one with that of refinement, must be incalculable. The influence of woman, too, on civilisation, is probably vastly greater in India than in the West. And this because the one woman to whose guidance a man is more or less willing to resign himself is also she whose impress is most indelible,—his mother.

Treating her child as a baby for at least two years, making herself his constant companion whenever he is in the house, cooking for him and watching him eat, and at the day's end telling him stories till he sleeps, it is not easy to overrate the part which the mother and the grandmother play, in the life

of the rising generation.

And this influence is redoubled, when the boy marries. In the West

“My son’s my son till he gets him a wife:

But my daughter’s my daughter all the
days of her life.”

The exact contrary is the case in India, where the little daughter-in-law comes home to be moulded and educated by her husband’s mother, while the daughter of the house goes forth to receive her training at other hands.

As one looks at modern India, therefore, one feels that in the womanly touch on the individual and on home-life lies the pivotal point of its being. There can be no doubt that to this is due that saturation of the people with their own folklore to which I referred in my first letter, and the exact conservatism of religious custom from age to age must surely be traced to the same source. A man may be a constant visitor in a Hindu house without even knowing where the rooms are in which the ladies live. Strength, it has been

said, lies in reserve, and those who are here so strictly concealed are perhaps all the more potent for that fact!

It is to women, then,—who have wielded with such power those great impulses of purity, renunciation, and spirituality upon which the India of to-day is built,—it is to these that must be committed those other ideas of strength, freedom, and humanity, which are to prove the legacy of this age to the world.

Without the underlying development strength would be a word of mockery: it is not to the denationalised that this inspiration can come in its vigour. All the tremendous discipline of the Hindu woman will be taxed to its utmost, to win and use that expanded education which she will need for this task. But she will be found equal to it all, for she will be answering the cry of her own children,—and is she not an Indian mother?

NIVEDITA.

Off Mimicoy, June 29th 1899.

THE COST OF LOVE

A STORY

BLESSED are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness. But thrice blessed are those who hunger and thirst after love—love real and all-embracing—that mighty solvent which melts away the distracting elements which go to make up the identity of the lower self of man. Instances of such genuine thirst for universal love are very few

and far between. Yet in response to the promptings of his higher nature, which, in spite of its being covered by manifold layers of superstition, often seeks to assert itself above all, man sometimes feels at least a vague hankering to break down the narrow restrictions of individuality and enclose all that is, within the infinite folds of his True Being—

which is Love.

About the end of the last century there lived in one of the centres of learning in Bengal a man of vast erudition and scholarship, who spent almost his whole life in discussing abstruse questions of religion and metaphysics and preaching to others the highest of the Scriptural truths which is so beautifully embodied in the text :—

विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि।

शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

“The wise equally look upon a Brahman of culture and conduct, a cow, an elephant and even a dog and a low outcast.”

When the pandit grew old he was compelled to retire from his controversial pursuits. The infirmity of age made it impossible for him to spend much time in study. So he began to feel vexed with himself and the world. Learning, which he had prized so highly in his youth, instead of proving a friend in time of need began to torment him in a thousand painful ways. The arguments which he used to make to silence his opponent in former years demanded practical demonstration at his own hands. He began to feel he should do what he had taught others to do. At the same time he felt he was lamentably wanting in moral vitality. He had no strength left in him to carry out the moral precepts that were constantly urging for realisation from within the innermost depths of his being. He felt his soul was dry as the desert. The natural springs of his heart dried up by the tremendous heat of controversy and he began to feel the need of a few drops of sympathy in his composition. He felt he should learn to love all. Yet every time he tried to extend his heart to others the old demon of aristocratic supremacy came upon him. He could not break down the barrier of habitual exclusiveness. Yet from within he felt he should love all.

During the period of this bitter struggle between the higher and the lower natures of the man, it happened one day that while he was despondently musing upon his painful situation and struggling to strike out a path to true love, it flashed upon his mind that he should seek the help of a competent spiritual guide who, unlike himself, had devoted all his energies to his own elevation and brought his life into entire harmony with the *spirit* of the truths taught in the Scriptures. He remembered to have heard of a saint (a householder though) of Brindaban who could impart with a single touch the true spirit of religion. He thought of going up to Brindaban at once to present himself before the saint with all the humility of a devoted disciple. Though aged and infirm, the strength of resolution bore him up through the fatigues of the long and tiresome journey. For it is our will which waxing strong makes us strong and we achieve things which are looked upon as superhuman feats by men unacquainted with the secret source of our activities. It is therefore no wonder that a man, whose thirst for true love grew so strong as to enable him to rend asunder the strongest ties of family affections at an age when they have the strongest hold upon our enfeebled nerves, should boldly face and surmount difficulties which affect only the surface of our mortal frame.

Just on reaching his destination the old Brahmin began to enquire with great impatience about the saint the charm of whose name had drawn him thither. The first day he received no definite answer from any one he met. But what was his joy when the following morning he heard that the saint was living very close to his quarters. The old man at once hurried to his house and began to call him aloud. On hearing his cry a young lady of about twenty with eyes glistening with the lustre of purity and a lofty scorn for all that smacks

of the world, stepped out with slow but determined steps and gravely enquired about the intention of the caller. "I want to see Sri Mukundadeva," hurriedly replied the Brahmin. "I want to become his disciple, for I heard he could make gods of men by infusing true love with a single touch of his hand. I die to see him. Pray, send him at once." To this the lady promptly replied, "I am the daughter of the acharya you speak of. I have learnt from him the secret of instilling love into others. If you like, I will give you what you want. Wait a bit, I am coming." So saying the majestic lady went back into the house and before the old Brahmin had completely recovered himself from the surprise at the strange spectacle just presented before his eyes, out rushed the lady with a drawn sword in hand and making quickly towards the man demanded of him *his head*. "*My head!*" faltered forth the

Brāhmin in blank dismay, to which the lady sternly replied, "How deluded you must be to think that you will have love without giving your head in return. Go back, poor soul, you are not yet fit to receive true love!" So saying the wonderful lady retired.

After a while the old man came to his senses and tried to see if there was any meaning in the lady's words. He began to ponder so deeply over it that he lost for a time all outward consciousness, a tranquil calm ensued which gave a repose to his soul which he had never known before. The dormant springs of his heart opened up at once. They flooded it with the ambrosial flow of love. With tears of joy in his eyes he broke forth into a torrent of ejaculation :—"I must work myself to death for others. That is giving the head for love. Self-sacrifice is the exact price of love. It is its sure result too."

VIMALANANDA.

EVOLUTION AND RELIGION

II

HUMAN consciousness is relative. Hence all its percepts and concepts obey the law of correlativity. As darkness implies light, evolution implies involution. It is a vulgar error to suppose that evolution is universal, or acting always everywhere. As darkness, light, and the intermediate stage, dusk, cannot either of them be said to be universal, *i. e.*, existent everywhere always; so evolution, involution or reversion, and the intermediate stage, 'constancy' or stand-stillism, cannot either of them be called universal.

In the poles, a day of six months alternates with a night of equal duration. In the same manner, a certain species may for a long

time go on steadily climbing up the evolution-ladder, after which it may come down and down until it reaches complete extinction.

On the other hand there are 'constants' in nature. Not only in mineral life, but in vegetable and animal kingdoms too, we come across persistent types. In the great stone book, there are imprints, not only of species that have passed away, but there are unmistakable records of forms which flourished in remote geological ages and which still survive. If we examine the atomic or the specific gravities, or indeed generally the physical and the chemical properties of the different kinds of matter, we find them unchanging.

From no fact known, from no circumstances suspected, or even conceivable, have we ground for doubting that the attributes of pure iron, or gold, or sulphur, were in the slightest degree other than ten million years ago, than what they are at present, or than what they will be ten million years hence. We also read in the *American Monthly Microscopical Journal* (March, 1897) in reference to some "Tuscarora" soundings: "The same forms are to be found in the Neocene of California whenever it has been examined, from Crescent City in Del Norte county on the north to a spot about forty miles south of the southern limit in Southern California, that is to say into Mexico. They are the same in the infusorial earth of the Atlantic Coast of North America, and likewise in South America when it has been detected at Poyta and Mejillones in Peru. In North America it is known as Miocene territory, and is seen at Atlantic City in New Jersey, at Richmond in Virginia, at various points in Maryland, as at Nottingham, and at Tampa Bay in Florida. It is likewise known at Oran in Africa, at Moron in Spain, at Mors in Denmark, at Catanisetta in Sicily, at Simbirsk in Russia, and at Senz Peter in Hungary. Besides, it is known at Netanaï in Japan and Oamaru in New Zealand.....And can we separate the Neocene from the recent soundings in any respect? I do not think so.....We cannot distinguish Neocene Bacillaria, Rhizopoda or Foraminifera from recent forms which are living now. Although the strata in New Zealand have been placed in the Cretaceous, and at Simbirsk in the lower Eocene, we must expect to see them bearing like forms to the recent, and which live more on the bottom of the ocean and are in every inlet along the coast."

As instances of retrogression and final extinction may be cited almost the whole race

of parasites and the Machairodon or the sabre-toothed tiger. "The various species of lice are supposed on good grounds to have once been Hemipterous insects whose wings have become abortive, and whose structure has in other respects grown ruder and lower. The fleas are in the same manner degenerated Diptera." The Machairodon furnishes a striking example of progression first and complete extinction afterwards. It seemed to have obtained in course of evolution every attribute needful for success in the great struggle for existence and for transmitting its descendants down to the present day. "Yet it has 'died and left no sign.' No Machairodon survives, nor yet any carnivore which can trace its descent to this terrible monster."

Then again "changes, be they for the better or the worse, are not necessarily in one direction only, like the prolongation of a line chalked upon a board, but may take ramifying courses like the branches of a tree." Another most important fact, which the scientific enquirer meets with in these studies, is that these changes are, more often than not, cyclical or periodically returning to their original starting point. "All the variations of the seasons, all the changes of climate, which we experience when traversing the earth's surface are of this character. By going on, we merely return to where we set out. But periodic change is the essence of individual development. The young animal passes through a series of changes, which may be described as a movement in the direction of perfection. It increases in size and strength; its various organs are matured and become capable of exercising their functions; its individual action as compared with the outer world is complete and then—? There follows a gradual decay in every respect as was expressed by the old moralists who compared the life of a man to a day or to a year."

Apropos of this the following extract from Dr. Archdall Reid's paper in the *Natural Science* (Decr '98) will be interesting.

"It is widely believed that the development of the individual is a recapitulation of the life-history of the race. In other words, it is believed that every individual begins life as a unicellular animal, the germ, and then, in a very rapid indistinct fashion, represents, in orderly succession, all its long line of ancestors, till in the end it represents its parent. This recapitulation is not more wonderful and mysterious than any other fact of biology. Imagine the primitive world, in which only unicellular organisms were present. Suppose that variations occurred amongst these, just as we know they occur higher in the scale. Then we may well believe that such variations as the following occurred—that, when one cell divided into two, the resulting cells did not separate, as normally happened, but remained adherent. This variation, which, like other variations, would tend to be transmitted, and which, if fortunate, would tend to cause the ultimate survival of the organisms which possessed it, would be the first step in the evolution of the multicellular from the unicellular organism. The dual animal which resulted would reproduce by each of its cells dividing into two, so that there would be four single cells which would separate, so as again to form unicellular organisms. But each unicellular organism would, in general, inherit the peculiarities and repeat the life-histories of its grandparent cells by dividing into two adherent cells. A race of two-celled organisms would thus be established. We may fairly believe that in time a second variation, which also proved fortunate, occurred, whereby the four grand-daughter cells also remained adherent until reproduction; and afterwards other variations of the like nature, till an organism was at length evolved which consisted of a multitude

of cells adherent for the common benefit. When this organism reproduced it would be by one or more of its cells separating and dividing into two adherent cells, these into four, and so on, till the parent organism was represented. Ontogeny would thus necessarily recapitulate phylogeny. This rule would still obtain when evolution proceeded farther, and cells had become differentiated and specialised for the performance of different functions. Every individual would still begin as a single cell, the germ, and then, step by step, would represent ancestor after ancestor till, at last, he represented the last of the race, the parent.....

That development is a recapitulation of evolution, in other words, that every individual repeats, though very rapidly and indistinctly, the life-history of his race, beginning with the unicellular organism and ending, in many cases, with the parent.....

Two things are evident from the foregoing. First, that there is on the average a greater tendency towards reversion than towards evolution, that is, there is a greater tendency to revert towards the ancestry than away from it, in other words, there is a greater tendency to let lapse in the ontogeny the last steps made in the phylogeny than to add other steps to them. Secondly, the strength of the tendency towards reversion is proportionate to the swiftness of the antecedent evolution, and, therefore, species which have been quickly evolved, tend to retrogress swiftly, whereas species, which have been slowly evolved, tend to retrogress slowly."

In passing, we draw the attention of the reader to the ancient theory of yugas or cycles of the Hindu Rishis, the four yugas following each other in a circle, like the seasons; the यद्वापूवमकल्पयत of the Vedas, the periodic absorption or the involution of the universe in the Avyakta and its evolution again on the same line as in previous

cycles.

To return to our subject. It has been shown that the tendency to revert or "involution," if not stronger than evolution is not less strong. And if this be a fact—and the leading scientists say it is,—a highly interesting branch of speculation reveals itself to the student of the Vedanta. For directly as the hour of evolution has struck, directly as the simple homogeneous, incoherent, indefinite *something* to which the previous universe had involved began to assume coherence and definiteness—what do we find? What does the imagination trained by science teach us to look out for?

Undoubtedly the display of the *tendency to revert to the original*—the Mother-force *—the struggle for harmony (or happiness), which expresses itself first, as chemical affinity, causing chemical combinations, crystallizations and so forth. Later on, when the nebulous and the mineral stages have been left behind, it develops as self-preservation and preservation of the species in the vegetable and the animal kingdoms; and in man grows up from these two roots a hundredfold, seeking for pleasurable feelings through all its branches.

Now if the tendency to revert to the original expresses itself as struggle for happiness, it goes without saying that the original was a state of happiness. If evolution begins with a struggle for happiness—a phenomenon which presupposes the *loss* of happiness with the beginning of heterogeneity—the implication contained is inevitable, that happiness had been reigning undisturbed in the state of homogeneity or Avyakta.

Evolution again, according to modern western science, as voiced by Mr. Herbert Spencer, can only stop when perfect happi-

ness has been gained. Thus is verified the Vriguballi (Taittiriya Upa. III, 15) Sruti.

यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते । येन जातानि जीवन्ति ।
यत् प्रयन्ताभिसंविशन्तीति तद्विजिज्ञासस्व । तद्वृद्धीति ॥

"That from which this universe has evolved, and being evolved it lives in which and in which it will go back and be absorbed, ask of that,—that is Brahman."

Ask of that, that is Brahman. True religion begins here. Science points out, that evolution starts out from that which is perfect happiness, runs its course on for happiness and at last ends in happiness.

आनन्दाद्देव खल्विमानि भूतानि जायन्ते,

आनन्देन जातानि जीवन्ति ।

आनन्दं प्रयन्ताभिसंविशन्ति आनन्दं वृद्धीति व्रजानात् ॥

It is the business of religion to study the details and bring this happiness home to every creature—to anticipate, to hasten, to make the path smooth for, evolution. It is the noblest and highest work that can be.

Thus religion and science are complementary : the one fulfils the other.

You really are the *all* conscious infinite area.

A little atom of this area is *self*-conscious now, and that is the *present you*, which has cut up the one area into the manifold variety of subjectivity and objectivity.

Like a tiny circle started in a lake by a small pebble,—like that ever-growing, ever-expanding circular ripple, this little self-conscious area expands, till,—though the analogy is not wholly true, as no analogy is,—like the wave stopping only when it has touched the bank, larger and ever larger this area grows in self-consciousness,—the small circular ripple of self-consciousness expands and expands, till the whole infinite area becomes self-conscious, and subject-consciousness and object-consciousness become one consciousness—the All-consciousness.

This is Moksha.

*Evolution rough-hews the organ, but reversion chisels its finer lines.—Dr. G. A. Reid.

'THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD.'

LET us be hospitable to all who bring out from the treasury 'things new and old,' the 'pearl of great price' or the questionable grain of gold. Especially let us be hospitable to the interesting thinkers who increasingly remind us of the ancient proverb that wisdom comes from the East.

It is now something like sixty years since the first of a band of liberal thinkers came from India with a remarkable blend of rational and spiritual religion, giving at once a hand to the ancient religions of India and to Christianity. Rammohun Roy surprised and delighted multitudes in this country with teachings as tenderly spiritual as they were sweetly reasonable; and good judges saw in him, with deep delight, the meeting of the waters. After him came the Brahmo Somaj and the highly inspirational teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen and his disciples, followed later by Mr. Mozoomdar, Swami Vivekananda and his friends, and Mr. Nagarkar, to say nothing of mysterious messengers from the Himalayas. If all these could be brought together, it would probably not be long before that which has befallen Christians in the west would befall 'the wise men from the east.' And yet, as with Christians, so with these teachers from India, there are certain characteristics which belong to them all. The western man is concrete and credal; the eastern is abstract and mystical. The western man loves a shell; the eastern loves freedom. The western man is a practical philosopher when he is not a philosophical theologian; the eastern is essentially poetic and idealistic. The western man dearly loves a boundary and an orthodoxy; the eastern delights in boundless vistas or

infinite haze. But the eastern has been rapidly learning how to be concrete, simple and practical, and may yet surprise his western brother as a guileless but subtle logician.

A rather good specimen of this blend of mysticism, logic and simplicity appears in that thoughtful Indian paper, 'Prabuddha Bharata,' in the form of a lecture by the Swami Abhedananda, on 'The Motherhood of God,' a subject which, apart from its working out, is sufficiently suggestive of unconventionality. The western man may expect eccentricity or even a touch of flippancy, but his mistake would be fundamental. The lecture is serious, logical, awakening, and one can hardly help feeling that only 'use and wont' prevent us from recognising that the phrase, 'The Fatherhood of God,' is really assailable.

In the word 'Nature' we find the clue which leads to the idea of 'The Motherhood' of God. Nature is the produced or, better still perhaps, the producer, the born or that which bears. We know nothing of the mode of being of God, and it is quite arguable,—we believe it has long been held in India,—that Nature has been the Mother of God, in any sense in which God is conscious. The Universe, says Swami Abhedananda, is a cosmos, one harmonious whole; and behind every step of evolution there is some orderly hidden purpose and energy. It is that purpose, that energy, which gives birth to all forms of life and intelligence. 'Thou art the *Parâ Prakriti*,' says an ancient Indian writing, 'the divine energy of the Supreme Being. Of Thee is born everything of the Universe; therefore Thou art the Mother of the Universe.' 'Wherever there is the expression of any force or power in the

Universe, there is the manifestation of the eternal *Prakriti* or the Divine Mother,—Mother, because that energy contains the germ of the phenomenal Universe, projects it into space and preserves it when it is born. Brāhma himself is her child, and the Hindus have worshiped her time out of mind. In the Rig Veda, the most ancient of the Hindu Scriptures, the Divine Mother is made to say :—

I am the Queen of the universe, the giver of all wealth and fruits of works. I am intelligent and omniscient. Although I am one, by My powers I appear as manifold. I cause war for protecting men, I kill the enemy and bring peace on earth. I stretch out heaven and earth. I have produced the Father. As the wind blows by itself, so I produce all phenomena by My own will. I am independent and responsible to none. I am beyond the sky, beyond this earth, My glory is the phenomenal universe ; such am I by My power.

‘Thus’ says Swami Abhedananda, ‘we see the Divine Mother is all in all. We live and move and have our existence in that Divine Mother.’

The influence of this fundamental idea is felt, says the Swami, all over India :—

As woman represents motherhood on earth, therefore all women, whether married or unmarried, are representatives of that Almighty Divine Mother of the universe. It is for this reason women are so highly revered and honoured by the Hindus. India is the only country in the world where God the Supreme Being is worshiped in the form of a woman as the Divine Mother of the Universe. In India the wives do not adopt their husbands’ name, they do not merge their individuality into their husbands’ as they do in the West, but they keep their own name separate. If a wife’s name be Rādhā, and her husband’s name be Krishna, and if we say them together, we should say Rādhā-Krishna and never Krishna-Rādhā. The wife’s name must be said first.

We have long needed a little more of this ‘superstition’ and sentiment in ‘this happy English isle.’

But, after all, it will perhaps be time enough to cease talking of ‘The Fatherhood of God’

when we have truly mastered it and truly believed in it. At present we are, as a rule, not much beyond the old Israelitish notion of Jehovah : and here we find this enlightened Indian’s teaching specially rational and wholesome. The Hebrew religion gave us the picture of a Jehovah, stern, arbitrary, and exacting as an eastern autocrat. Says the Swami :—

As a ruler punishes his disobedient subjects, so Jehovah punished those who disobeyed Him or His laws. The duty of a subject was almost the same as that of a slave to his master. As a slave serves his master through fear of punishment, so the Hebrews served Jehovah. The transition from such a relation to that of a father to a son was indeed a grand step. It was no longer an eternal relation to power and strength, but it became a kind of kinship, a kind of internal or blood-relation, which exists between the earthly father and his son.

But ‘the same Jehovah when considered as the Father of the universe by Jesus and his followers, did not lose this extra-cosmic nature. Even to-day the majority of the Christians cannot go beyond this idea of an extra-cosmic God.’ And that is where we are to-day for the most part. What if the profound eastern idea of the Motherhood of God, allied to our already fruitful idea of the Immanent (instead of the transcendent) God, should turn out to be the practical emancipation of the western mind, delivering it from the anthropomorphic images that cluster about this ‘extra-cosmic’ God, and introducing it to a thought of God which will bring Him absolutely near?—*The leading Editorial of “Light,” London, July 8th, 1899.*

Force, Force, everywhere Force ; we ourselves a mysterious Force in the centre of that. ‘There is not a leaf rotting on the highway but has Force in it : how else could it rot?’ Nay surely, to the Atheistic Thinker, if such a one were possible, it must be a miracle too, this huge illimitable whirlwind of Force, which envelops us here ; never-resting whirlwind, high as Immensity, old as Eternity.—*Carlyle.*

THE CENTRAL HINDU COLLEGE. WHY IT SHOULD BE SUPPORTED

THE idea that the Hindus should have a national college had occurred to many of us; but hitherto, it had to remain beyond the regions of possibility. It required an Annie Besant with her vast sympathy for India and the Hindus and her experience of European social movements, to give the idea an articulate expression. Her eloquent appeal for funds for the Central Hindu College scheme, has enlisted our sympathy and produced an amount of enthusiasm which we never thought we were capable of. But enthusiasm is likely to cool and adverse criticism to grow. So the sympathisers of the scheme must record from time to time the reasons as to why it is entitled to the support of us all, to prevent the interest in it from flagging. We regard the institution as epoch-making, destined to produce manifold benefits, educational, social, and religious. Already the Muham-madans of India, with the god-fatherly encouragement of the Indian Government, are moving in the matter of having a university of their own, backed by their intense love of their religion and sense of racial solidarity. Why should not the Hindus have a university of their own, when their fellow-countrymen are trying to have one?

The Central Hindu College scheme should be regarded as epoch-making from three points of view. Firstly, educa-

tional. It will supply a want which is more and more being felt in the present system of education, namely the absence of any provision for imparting religious instruction. No doubt there has been an enormous amount of intellectual and moral awakening even through the purely secular education imparted in our schools and colleges. But can the greatest optimist of the present system of education assert that it will be all the worse, if associated with something like occasional religious instruction? The Central Hindu College professes to teach to the highest standard attainable in any Indian university, nay to reproduce some of the best features of English universities in the matter of endowments for scholarships, fellowships, etc. If it attains the development which its founders seek and expect, it will become the largest institution of its kind in India. Whether it will solve the many educational questions which have of late cropped up, such as the evils of cram and the absence of originality, cannot be theorised now, but must be left to time to decide. But there can be no denying that, even if it be not a panacea for all the maladies of the present system of education, through it a means will be found to make the ethical ideals of Hinduism mould the life of the coming generations of Hindus and thus make them doubly better. Even if it be

a single college and no more, it will be entitled to our support. But it is more. Its advantages lie not so much in its actualities as in its possibilities in the future. It professes to be only the heart of an educational agency, which, it is hoped, will ramify throughout India, giving to the Hindus the control of their own education, than which there is no more glorious prospect. The anomaly of Hindu students studying in mission colleges whose avowed and prime object, with some honourable exceptions, is the conversion of the *heathen*, must be put an end to. That the influence of the proposed Hindu College cannot but be of great use in this direction is evidenced from the fact, that already one of the largest of mission colleges in Calcutta is said to contemplate a change of attitude towards its Hindu students. So much for the educational aspect of the question which is the least in importance. Now going to the social aspect, we think it is fraught with greater power for good. Any institution which professes to be anything like national, is bound to become what may be called, for want of a better expression, a great social *idea*. What is the social idea which the Central Hindu College will foster? If there be one thing which the Hindus should seek to realize, it is the idea of the unification of our race, which is dimly taking a form, corresponding to the idea of Federation and Anglo-American Union, among the people of the United Kingdom. We can no longer remain congeries of people erecting great social barriers between the people of one province and another. Social exigencies

require the unity of the Hindus so far as is practicable. "Provincial patriotism" must give place to Pan-Indian. The nation must become organic, the whole participating in the experiences, good and bad of the part. The Indian National Congress has already marked one stage in the unification of India, by facilitating the assemblage of the people from all parts of India, for the purpose of discussing common political questions. The Central Hindu College will build another arch in the edifice of Hindu unity, by enlisting the sympathy of all Hindus for a common educational object. The above ideas may appear utopian and ultra-sentimental. But a survey of the conditions of life of modern India, irresistibly points to the conclusion that nothing short of national unity can ensure our salvation and that a striving for the same cannot be too early begun. This is an aspect of the question which unfortunately has not been dwelt upon in the Indian papers with the prominence its importance requires, and it is this aspect of the question which gives Annie Besant's scheme its ever-enduring interest for Hindus.

Now to the religious aspect of the question. It is unnecessary for us to refer to the Revival of Hinduism which for good or evil is a positive fact and must be reckoned with all the speculations on the future of Hindu society. The Hindus have seriously begun to study and admire their Scriptures. The conviction is growing upon them that it is the only religion which is in harmony with the facts of human life and the main conclusions of modern science. If it only begins to prosecute a strong pro-

selytising career, armed with all the resources of wealth and organization, its success in the world of thought is assured. Already without any extrinsic aids, it is penetrating the minds of thinking foreigners. The Central Hindu College may be easily made, among its other functions, to subserve the purposes of a theological seminary, capable of training and sending Hindu missionaries like the Swami Vivekananda, to all parts of the world, with infinite good, spiritual and political for India and other countries. Believing as we do that the present Revival of Hinduism is highly conducive to national progress in all its forms and that religious and social reforms rightly viewed, have identical objects to work for and identical results to achieve, we sanguinely hope that the Central Hindu College scheme, if it attains its fruition, will give new vitality to Hinduism and will be a landmark in the history of the Hindus in

the latter part of the nineteenth century. Such is the institution which claims our support. All lovers of our country and religion should rally for bringing it to completion.

Prof. Max Müller, the great Indianist, in his latest discourse on the Hindus, still credits them with possessing the faculty to conceive and accomplish noble things. May the Hindus render themselves worthy of the compliment, and throwing aside the cynicism which is an excuse for inactivity, co-operate with those philanthropic Europeans whose sympathy for India and intense practicality have initiated this movement for a Central Hindu College.

“There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;

Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows, and in miseries.”

R. A.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

VEDANTA WORK IN AMERICA

SINCE Swami Abhedananda left New York early in April he has been lecturing before audiences in the State of Massachusetts, being the beloved and honored guest of citizens in the various places. The Swami has visited Worcester, Lynn, Waltham, the University town of Cambridge, Fitchburg, Concord, where Emerson, the greatest American prophet lived, and Boston.

Among the subjects of the Swami's lectures are The Religion of the Hindus, Reincarnation,

The Vedanta Philosophy, What is Divine Love, Immortality, The Social and Political condition of India. To an American interested in the Vedanta Philosophy and desiring that its truths be more widely known, it is highly gratifying to note the cordial hearing given to the Swami. Besides lectures arranged for by friends, delivered in public halls, the Swami spoke by invitation before the North Shore Club, composed of literary women ; another club of scholars, The Psychomath ; the Cambridge Conference, a body of liberal

and cultivated men and women prominent in scientific and philosophic study ; the Appalachian Mountain Club, devoted to mountain tours a-foot and the study of nature ; the Peace Society, a body devoted to the abolition of war and the settlement of all disputes by arbitration ; the Twentieth Century Club, whose audience comprised men prominent in the political affairs of Boston ; the Sub-Master's Club ; and the Episcopal Theological School of Cambridge, whose students are preparing for Christian ministry. The Swami was listened to with close attention and respect and many questions were asked regarding the religious ideas of the Hindus. Swami Abhedananda has fully grasped the habit and character of the western mind and never fails to understand the bearings of questions and to give logical, convincing and satisfying answers. This occasion was full of interest and of happy outlook. The young men who shall soon be religious teachers, showed a sincere desire to know the views of a Hindu regarding spiritual matters, and in their attitude toward out-grown orthodox beliefs made it clear that with them, at least, popular theological superstitions are giving way to reason, science, philosophy and religion.

Boston is pre-eminently the city of scholarship and culture, with the adjoining town of Cambridge, the seat of Harvard, the oldest of American colleges. In the audiences addressed by Swami Abhedananda during April and May were some of the foremost scholars in this country.

At the Annual Meeting of the Sub-Master's Club in Boston on the 26th of May, the distinguished guests were Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, now nearly eighty years of age, the author of our ringing "Battle Hymn of the Republic," Mrs. Kate Gannett Wells of the State Board of Education, and the Swami Abhedananda. After a reception and dinner the Swami in an informal address

said that India is the birthplace of all civilization. For instance, though Pythagoras has been called the father of geometry, it is certain that the science was developed in India 200 years before the birth of Pythagoras. Decimal notation was also in use in India long before the Arabs are alleged to have invented it. The Hindoos also deserve the credit for discovering algebra and trigonometry before they were carried into Egypt.

"You will remember that in speaking of the Hindoos, I mean the Aryan race in India, which is of the same great ethnological division to which belong the peoples of Europe and America. The term Hindoo is a foreign appellation, and we call ourselves Aryans and our language the Aryan language.

"Rational medicine, evolution and Darwinism, the atomic theory and psychology, all had their origin in India during that fruitful period between 2000 B. C. and 500 B. C. So philosophical has the Hindoo mind become that nothing illogical can be believed by our educated people. That explains the lack of success the Christian missionaries have among the higher classes in India.

"You will be interested to learn something about Indian customs, and correct some ideas you may have received in Sunday school. I remember my feelings when I was told in New York about the Hindoo mothers throwing their babies to the crocodiles in the Ganges. In the first place, there are no crocodiles in the Ganges, which has too swift a current for those animals to live in. I have swum across the Ganges at Calcutta, and never heard of a crocodile there. I have also travelled nearly the whole length of that noble river without hearing any babies being thrown into it.

"All the ideas in the teaching of Jesus are to be found in the books of Buddha, written many years before the birth of Christ. We

do not believe in the creation of the world from nothing, but from an infinite ocean of matter and force. We believe in an immanent and omnipresent deity, which is one with the visible universe. We cannot believe that men are born sinful, but pure, as children of God.

"We think all souls have existed before, and will exist again, either in a lower or a higher form. Our theory includes no belief in eternal punishment. Punishment comes from ourselves, and not from God; the present is a result of the past, and the future will rest upon the present. The result of this appears in the ratio of one criminal out of two thousand population in India, and one criminal out of two hundred in America. The missionaries who come to India to tell us that all Hindoos who do not accept Christianity will go to eternal punishment after death are treated politely by our people, but believed only by the most ignorant."

The Swami recited in his own language, and afterward translated into English several beautifully expressed prayers learned when a boy.

A NEW YORK STUDENT.

A SUGGESTION

I HAVE carefully read Mr. R. Aramuthoo Iyenger's thoughtful and patriotic paper on "Some Needs of Hinduism," and feel sure that I am not the only individual in the land who is willing to do all that he could in helping to carry out the very practical ideas for the defence of our Religion and Society given out by him. But my object in writing this is not merely to express agreement and sympathy with Mr. Iyenger's scheme: I have a humble suggestion to make in connexion with it.

I fancy that to start the pamphleteering work in a thoroughly efficient manner, representatives of all the Indian Verna-

culars would have to be got together in a head-quarter which should be the centre of the whole business. The necessity of having constant meetings and interchanges of views, discussions preliminary to the selection of subjects and subsequent to writing them, in which communication of the local requirements of different parts of the country would be so essential, and the carrying on of the heavy correspondence, proof-reading and other business make the living together of the immediate workers in one and the same spot absolutely indispensable.

This being so, why should not the workers form themselves into an ideal colony where all the things that would be taught in the tracts should be practised? The old saying "example is better than precept" holds as good to-day, as ever. Let all those reforms, social, economical and religious, which are advocated by educated orthodox Hindus be first introduced into this colony; and from here through example and precept, they will by and by make their way among the masses.

For the means of support of the colony and the carrying out of its various works, I have not much faith in public donations and subscriptions. I think if the proprietors of the Prabuddha Bharata, while having the control of the paper in their hands, give away a part of the income from it to the colony, the problem of money would be solved. For it is easy to increase the circulation of a cheap paper like the Prabuddha Bharata indefinitely. No educated Hindu, I believe, will grudge to spend Re. 1-8 a year on its subscription to help a cause like this.

Instead of each worker and member of the colony having an individual interest of his own in unavoidable competition with those of the others, the socialistic principle of common interests adapted to

our own ancient caste-system may be adopted with advantage. But this or any other method of organising the colony will depend upon the choice of the workers themselves, to be decided by them when they shall have come together. On the other hand it is plain that the pay of the workers could not be fixed now : the fund from which it would be drawn depending for its existence on the increased circulation of the Prabuddha Bharata.

Should the above suggestion be deemed feasible, the consent of the proprietors of the Prabuddha Bharata to give away a part of the income accruing from the paper should be secured, first of all. And secondly, duly qualified workers representing all the Indian vernaculars should come forward and form a committee, draw up a prospectus, communicate with all the friendly Associations, Libraries, Societies and individuals all over the country, with a view to arrange for the increase of circulation of the Prabuddha Bharata and distribution of the tracts, and give effect generally to all things necessary to be done

in connexion with the furtherance of the work.

TWENTIETH CENTURY.

[Should a number of earnest and sincere men take up this project and join their hands and heads to carry it out, we are prepared to do all that lies in our power to further it. We shall be very glad to set apart a portion of the income for the support of the colony or the body of workers, if a fair number of subscribers is added to the lists of Prabuddha Bharata. But we should also call for donations to meet the many preliminary expenses.

The Advaita Ashrama is further prepared to find board and lodgings for six to eight workers free of charge, for a year, if it is made the head-quarters of the work. The Prabuddha Bharata Press might also offer great facilities for printing, etc.

In this connexion we feel it our duty to state that the excellent climate, the easy terms on which land could be got in vast areas, the fertility of the soil and many other natural advantages single out this part of the Himalaya as an exceedingly suitable spot for starting a colony. We shall be happy to supply all informations on this head on application.—Ed.]

NĀNĀ KATHĀ

I BELIEVE we can go a little further than M. Schiaparelli, and affirm the undoubted existence of unknown forces capable of moving matter and of counteracting the action of gravity. It is a combination, difficult to analyse, of physical and psychic forces. But such facts, however extravagant they may appear, deserve to enter the domain of scientific investigation. It is even probable that they may powerfully contribute towards the elucidation of the problem—for us supreme—of the nature of the human soul. Unquestionably we have not yet the data necessary to define these forces ; but for this one can hardly throw the blame on those who study them.—*Flammarion*.

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It sounds a paradoxical thing to say, but it

is nevertheless profoundly true, that France is a nation in process of being ruined by the thrift and prudence of its citizens. To live poorly because it is so much easier to save money than to make it, to have no children for fear they should die of starvation, that is the summing-up of the Frenchman's penny-wise philosophy ; and, if there is truth in logic, it is the individual Frenchman who is keeping France back in the race, just as it is the individual Anglo-Saxon who is winning the battle for his community. England succeeds, says M. Demolins, because it is the country of self-help. It is the country of self-help because the whole course of Anglo-Saxon education tends to make men self-reliant.—*Edinburgh Review*.